



Indiana Stadium and Convention Building Authority

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ISCBA ANNOUNCES NEW WBE/MBE INITIATIVE

INDIANAPOLIS - Thanks to a new initiative, the Indiana Stadium and Convention Building Authority (ISCBA) is taking steps to encourage more minority and women business participation in construction contracts for the new Lucas Oil Stadium and Convention Center expansion in downtown Indianapolis.

A six-step plan has been announced by ISCBA executive director John P. Klipsch to achieve goals for minority and women contractors (M/WBE) to share in contracts for the project. A local consulting firm, Engaging Solutions, is helping Klipsch and his staff recruit more minority and women vendors to bid on contract packages for the stadium. The company also is working with the Construction Management team -- Hunt/Smoot/Mezzetta -- to ensure the overall project goals are met.

"Including both construction and professional services, MBE firms so far account for 13.07 percent and WBE firms account for 3.70% of the contracts awarded versus the 15/5 percent project goals," said Klipsch.

Klipsch said his team is making every effort to include minority and women vendors in the work, but he has been handicapped thus far by two factors -- not enough bidders on specific jobs and the failure of some vendors to meet requirements included in requests for proposals. His new initiative stresses the following:

1. When a bid is submitted, it will be accompanied by a letter of commitment that describes the level of participation of specific minority and women-owned firms, and is signed by the MBE and WBE contractors. Previously, prime contractors were allowed to turn in a statement a day later to indicate their intent to subcontract.
2. Engaging Solutions will have an enhanced role at pre-bid meetings to stress the need to find qualified subcontractors before the bid date, emphasize the importance of utilizing MBE and WBE firms that are certified by the Indiana Department of Administration, and will offer assistance in meeting those goals.

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3. Throughout the life of a contract, contracts will be evaluated concerning a prime contractor's ability to meet the M/WBE requirements. If it is determined that a prime did not meet its commitments because of reasons within its control, penalties will be investigated. Such penalties are already listed in the bid documents and are available to be implemented as necessary.
4. Hunt/Smoot/Mezzetta is evaluating upcoming bid packages to determine which will include increased participation goals. On packages where it appears that multiple qualified M/WBE contractors are available, goals will be increased.
5. Orientation and information sessions, including site tours, for specific interest groups will begin in June. Project goals, diversity efforts and bidding procedures will be highlighted and explained.
6. A more proactive approach will be pursued to increase awareness of project contract opportunities.

“Our potential for success toward these goals is influenced to a great degree by the existence of so many other high profile projects in the area,” said Klipsch. “Many of these projects are competing for the same MBE and WBE contractors, and a lot of these contractors are stretched out over a variety of projects currently underway.”

Now under construction just south of the RCA Dome in the Hoosier capital, Lucas Oil Stadium will feature seven levels, a retractable roof and 63,000 permanent seats. It can be expanded to 70,000 to host NCAA Final Four men's and women's basketball games or the Super Bowl. The multi-purpose stadium also will be used for major conventions, trade shows and special events such as the annual Indiana Black Expo and Circle City Classic.

The new stadium is scheduled to be completed in time for the opening of the Colts football season in August 2008. Upon its completion, the RCA Dome will be torn down to accommodate a major addition to the Convention Center. That project is targeted for a 2010 completion.